

A wikked wawe away to were.
It is Caribdis perilous,
Disagreeable and gracious.
It is discordaunce that can accorde,
And accordaunce to discorde.
It is cunning withoute science,
Wisdom withoute sapience,
Wit withoute discrecioun,
Havoir, withoute possession.
It is sike hele and hool siknesse,
A thrust drowned in dronkenesse,
An helthe ful of maladye,
A charitee ful of envye,
An hunger ful of habundaunce,
And a greedy suffisaunce;
Delyt right ful of hevinesse,
And drevibed ful of gladnesse;
Bitter swetnesse and swete errour,
Right evel savoured good savour;
Sinne that pardoun hath withinne,
And pardoun spotted without with sinne;
A peyne also it is, joyous,
And felonye right pitous;
Also pley that selde is stable,
And stedefast stat, right mevable;
A strengthe, weyked to stonde upright,
And feblenesse, ful of might;
Wit unavyssed, sage folye,
And joye ful of turmentrye;
A laughter it is, weping ay,
Rest, that travyleth night and day;
Also a swete helle it is,
And a sorowful Paradys;
A plesaunt gayl and esy prisoun,
And, ful of froste, somer sesoun;
Dryme temps, ful of frostes whyte,
And May, devoide of al delyte,
With seer braunches, blossoms ungrene;
And newe fruyt, fillid with winter tene.
It is a slowe, may not forbere
Ragges, ribaned with gold, to were;
for al so wel wol love be set
Under ragges as riche rochet;
And eek as wel be amourettes
In mourning blak, as bright burnettes.
for noon is of so mochel prys,
Ne no man founden is so wys,
Ne noon so high is of parage,
Ne no man founde of wit so sage,
No man so hardy ne so wight,
Ne no man of so mochel might,
Noon so fulfilled of bounte,
But he with love may daunted be.
Al the world holdith this way;
Love makith alle to goon miswey,
But it be they of yvel lyf,
Whom Genius cursith, man and wyf,
That wrongly werke ageyn nature.
Noon suche I love, ne have no cure
Of suche as Loves servaunts been,
And wol not by my counsel fleen.
for I ne preysse that loving,
Wherthurgh man, at the laste ending,

Shal calle hem wrecchis fulle of wo,
Love greveth hem and shendith so.
But if thou wolt wel Love eschewe,
for to escape out of his mewe,
And make al hool thy sorwe to slake,
No bettir counsel mayst thou take,
Than thinke to fleen wel, ywis;
May nought helpe elles; for wite thou this:
If thou fleest it, it shal fle thee;
folowe it, and folowen shal it thee.

L'Amaunt.

WHAN I hadde herd al Resoun seyn,
Which hadde spilt hir speche in
veyn:
Dame, seyde I, I dar wel sey
Of this avaunt me wel I may
That from your scole so deviant

I am, that never the more avaunt
Right nought am I, thurgh your doctryne;
I dulle under your disciplyne;
I wot no more than I wist er,
To me so contrarie and so fer
Is every thing that ye me lere;
And yit I can it al par euere.
Myn herte foryetith therof right nought,
It is so writen in my thought;
And depe graven it is so tendir
That al by herte I can it rendre,
And rede it over comunely;
But to mysself lewedist am I.
But sith ye love discreven so,
And lakke and preise it, bothe two,
Defyneth it into this letter,
That I may theken on it the better;
for I herde never diffyne it ere,
And wilfully I wolde it lere.

Raisoun.

If love be serched wel and sought,
It is a syknesse of the thought
Annexed and knet bitwixe tweyne,
Which male and female, with oo cheyne,
So frely byndith, that they nil twinne,
Whether so therof they lese or winne.
The roote springith, thurgh hoot brenning,
Into disordinat desiring
for to kissen and embrace,
And at her lust them to solace.
Of other thing love recchith nought,
But setteth hir herte and al hir thought
More for delectacioun
Than any procreacioun
Of other fruyt by engendring;
Which love to God is not plesing;
for of hir body fruyt to get
They yeve no force, they are so set
Upon delyt, to pley in fere.
And somme have also this manere,
To feynen hem for love seke;
Sich love I preise not at a leke.
for paramours they do but feyne;
To love truly they disdeyne.
They falsen ladies traitoursly,
And sweren hem othes utterly,

With many a lesing, and many a fable,
And al they finden deceyvable.
And, when they her lust han geten,
The hooce erces they al foryeten.
Wimmen, the harm they byen ful sore;
But men this thenken evermore,
That lasse harm is, so mote I thee,
Disceyve them, than disceyved be;
And namely, wher they ne may
finde non other mene wey.
for I wot wel, in sothfastnesse,
That who doth now his bisynesse
With any womman for to dele,
for any lust that he may fele,
But if it be for engendrure,
He doth trespassse, I you ensure.
for he shulde setten al his wil
for to geten a likly thing him til,
And to sustenen, if he might,
And kepe forth, by kindes right,
his owne lylnesse and semblable,
for bicause al is corumpable,
And faille shulde successioun,
Ne were ther generacioun
Our sectis strene for to save.
Whan fader or moder am in grave,
hir children shulde, when they ben deede,
ful diligent ben, in hir steede,
to use that werke on such a wyse,
That oon may thurgh another ryse.
Therefore set Kinde therin delyt,
for men therin shulde hem delyte,
And of that dede be not erke,
But ofte sythes haunt that werke.
for noon wolde drawe therof a draught
Ne were delyt, which hath him caught.
This hadde sotil dame Nature;
for noon goth right, I thee ensure,
Ne hath entent hool ne parfyte;
for hir desir is for delyt,
The which fortene crece and eke
The pley of love for ofte seke,
And thralle hemself, they be so nyce,
Unto the prince of every vyce.
for of ech sinne it is the rote,
Unlefulle lust, though it be sote,
And of al yvel the racyne,
As Tullius can determyne,
Which in his tyme was ful sage,
In a boke he made of Age,
Wher that more he preyseth Elde,
Though he be croked and unwelde,
And more of commendacioun,
Than Youthe in his discrepcioun.
for Youthe set bothe man and wyf
In al perel of soule and lyf;
And perel is, but men have grace,
The tyme of youthe for to pace,
Withoute any deth or distresse,
It is so ful of wildenesse;
So ofte it doth shame or damage
To him or to his linage.
It ledith man now up, now down,

In mochel dissolucioun,
And makith him love ill company,
And lede his lyf disrewlily,
And halt him payed with noon estate.
Within himself is such debate,
He chaungith purpos and entent,
And yalt him into som covent,
To liven afir her emprise,
And lesith freedom and fraunchyse,
That Nature in him hadde set,
The which ageyn he may not get,
If he there make his mansioun
for to abyde professioun.
Though for a tyme his herte absente,
It may not fayle, he shal repente,
And eke abyde thilke day
To leve his abit, and goon his way,
And lesith his worship and his name,
And dar not come ageyn for shame;
But al his lyf he doth so mourne,
Bicause he dar not hoom retourne.
freedom of kinde so lost hath he
That never may recured be,
But if that God him graunte grace
That he may, er he hennes pace,
Conteyne undir obedience
Thurgh the vertu of pacience.
for Youthe set man in al folye,
In unthrift and in ribaudye,
In lecherye, and in outrage,
So ofte it chaungith of corage.
Youthe ginneth ofte sich bargeyn,
That may not ende withouten peyn.
In gret perel is set youth/hede,
Delyt so doth his bridil lede,
Delyt thus hangith, drede thee nought,
Bothe mannys body and his thought,
Only thurgh Youthe, his chamberere,
That to don yvel is customere,
And of nought elles taketh hede
But only folkes for to lede
Into disporte and wildenesse,
So is she froward from sadnesse.
AT Elde drawith hem therfro;
Who wot it nought, he may wel go
Demand of hem that now am olde,
That whylom Youthe hadde in holde,
Which yit remembre of tendir age,
How it hem brought in many a rage,
And many a foly therin wrought.
But now that Elde hath hem thurgh/sought,
They repente hem of her folye,
That Youthe hem putte in jupardye,
In perel and in muche wo,
And made hem ofte amis to do,
And such yvel companye,
Riot and avouterye.
AT Elde can ageyn restreyne
from suche foly, and refreynce,
And set men, by hir ordinaunce,
In good reule and in governaunce.
But yvel she spendith hir servyse,
for no man wol hir love, ne pryse;